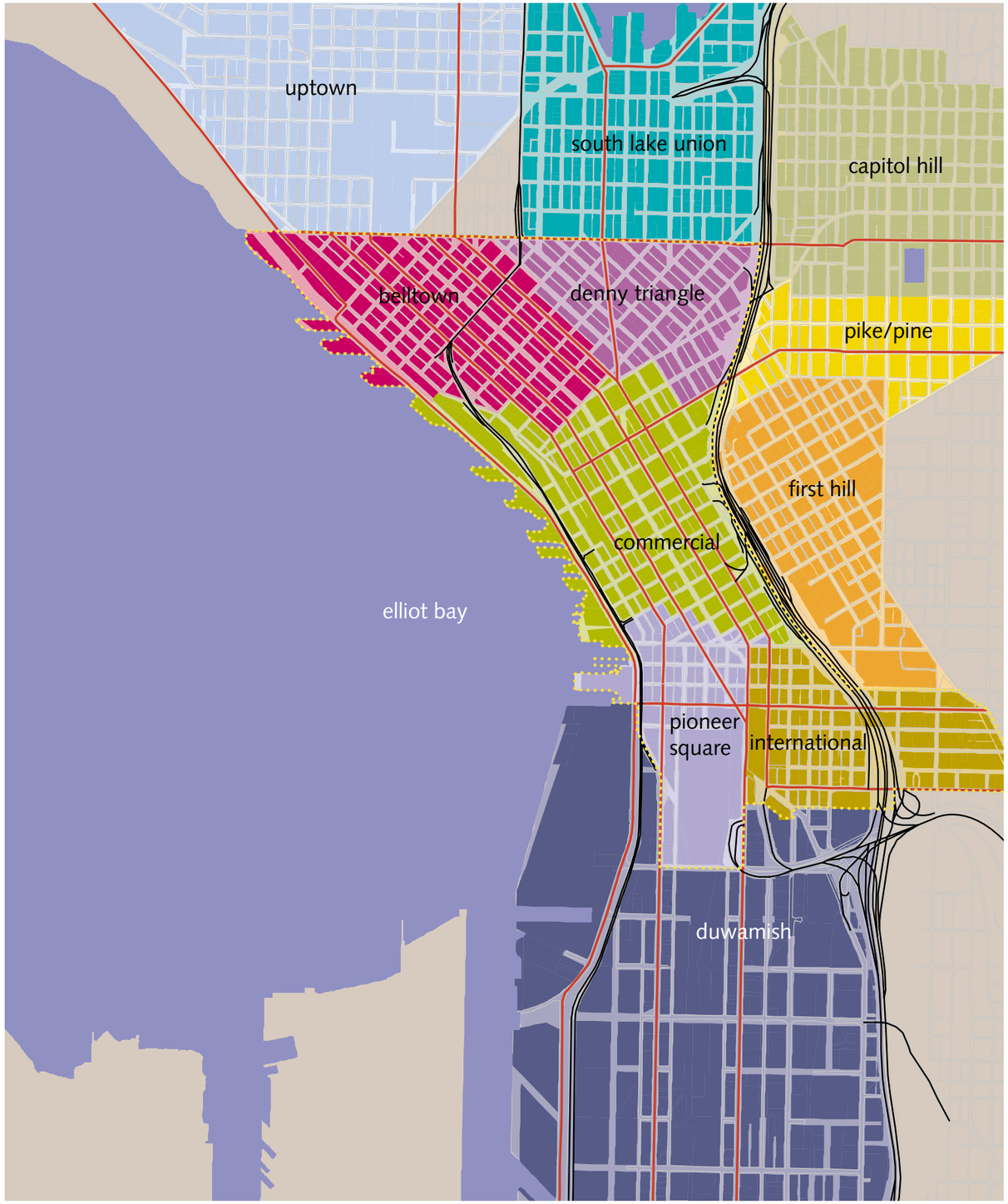
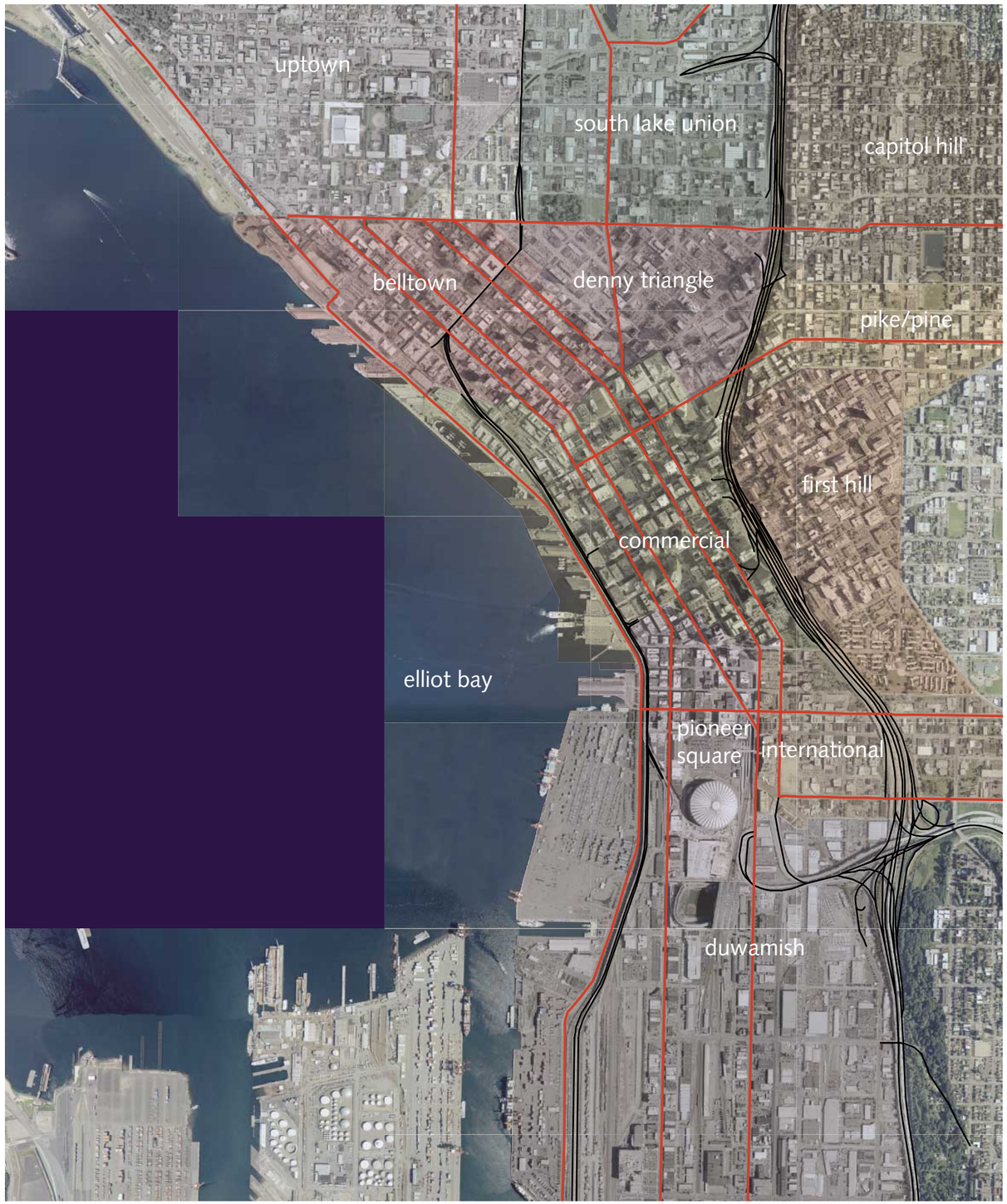

uptown
south lake union
capitol hill
belltown
denny triangle
pike/pine
first hill
commercial
elliot bay
pioneer
square
international
duwamish


uptown
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capitol hill
belltown
denny triangle
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elliot bay
pioneer
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duwamish

Introduction
In August, 2002, Sea Reach Ltd. was contracted by the City of Seattle to conduct Phase II of the Center City Wayfinding Project. This document presents a summary of our work on Task I of this phase (research). It presents Purpose (our goals and guiding principles), Procedure (our methods), Data (information gathered), and Conclusions (our recommendations).

Purpose
The overall goal of the Center City Wayfinding project, Phase II, is the creation of "a manual of design guidelines that will serve as a framework for wayfinding in all Seattle neighborhoods" (Center City Wayfinding Phase II Scope of Work, 5/2002).

Sea Reach has approached this project with two primary goals:

- To design a wayfinding system for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic in Seattle Center City, directing people in and out of the city, around the city, and to destinations effectively, comfortably, and confidently.

- To develop a set of guidelines for the Center City and Neighborhoods that will support and enhance the overall wayfinding system. These guidelines will be intended to streamline efforts between neighborhoods and to standardize location, height, viewing distances, etc.—while retaining individual neighborhood identities.

To achieve these goals, it was essential to begin by gathering information: compiling maps, databases, and regulations from the City of Seattle; inventorying neighborhoods, destinations, existing signage, maps, brochures, and information stations; meeting with and interviewing stakeholders; and compiling this information into a central database. This research phase is referred to as Task I.

The baseline information gathered during Task I will be the foundation on which we create recommendations for the Center City Wayfinding System.

What is Wayfinding?
Wayfinding is the process of navigating an unfamiliar environment; for example, visitors new (or relatively new) to Seattle must use wayfinding as they move from destination to destination. The process of wayfinding comprises two distinct phases: decision-making (forming a plan for travel), and decision-executing (actively traveling).

Wayfinding systems are designed to assist travelers in both the decision-making and decision-executing phases of their journeys. A traveler in a new environment needs to know the location of her/his destination, her/his own location relative to that destination, and the overall layout of the environment. Well-designed systems make this information clear through architecture, sign placement, graphic design, and text.

While many people equate "wayfinding" with "signage," the two are not synonymous. A wayfinding system is a system of navigation, while signage is the means of delivery for part, but not necessarily all, of that system.

(Wayfinding definitions [paraphrased] from signweb website)

Procedure
In the original Scope of Work (5/2002), we were asked to complete the following subtasks during the research phase:

- Review the pilot project
- Inventory current City databases
- Review existing sign regulations
- Identify problem areas and opportunities
- Coordinate final use of the data

As we planned our work for Task I, we came to realize that to complete our research, and to have the best possible data set from which to work, we would need to take a more intensive, field-based approach than had been anticipated. We (and the City) had thought that our work under b) above would consist primarily of compiling already-available data.

However, spurred by to a lack of thorough and current City data on existing signage, we felt that our first and most important subtask within this phase would be to complete an intensive, on-site survey of the Center City neighborhoods. Through this survey—which would document directional signage, thematic elements, and neighborhood architecture and identity elements as well as current wayfinding information—we would come to know the character of each neighborhood, and observe first-hand its traffic patterns, destinations, and routes. We would emerge from the process with a database that was thorough, concise, and tailored for use during the design phase.

Accordingly, we re-organized and augmented the subtasks listed in the Scope of Work. This new list of subtasks appears below.

Neighborhood Inventory
Staff: Susan Jurasz, Peter Reedijk, Catherine McCoy, Katherine Hocker, Katie Butowicz
This was the largest piece of our research effort: fieldwork to create the foundation on which our design recommendations will be based. Our goal in this subtask was not just to compile a database of existing signage, but to document each neighborhood's unique flavor, as well as its traffic patterns and its major destinations.

Field research teams consisted of one photographer, one or two data-recorders, and a mapper. The photographer was responsible for taking digital photos of signs, architecture, thematic elements according to our established categories (see below). The data recorders noted the location, subject, and category of each photograph, and took notes on the general character of the neighborhood. The mapper recorded the location of each photograph.

We began each neighborhood session by driving the perimeter, noting major entrances and looking for visual clues (architecture, signage, businesses, artworks, etc.) that give the visitor a sense that s/he is entering an area with a distinct character. We photo-documented each intersection.

Next, we walked the grid of streets within the neighborhood in the direction of traffic (where applicable), photo-documenting according to the following categories:

After each field session, we entered all of the neighborhood data into our database, labeling and linking photographs and information to the GIS map. We also wrote 1-2 page narrative descriptions of the neighborhoods for our own future reference.

Findings
(not included in this draft)

Review of Work to Date
Staff: Susan Jurasz, Peter Reedijk, Catherine McCoy
We reviewed the Phase I suggestions and solutions, the Duwamish Wayfinding Plan, and the Blue Ring study, as well as Sounder/transit wayfinding. Details on these studies are listed below:

Downtown Wayfinding Project, 1998
Purpose: Wayfinding effort, Phase I

Client: City of Seattle
Jeff Bender
Project Manager
Citydesign
600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104
206-684-8837 (ph)
206-233-3887 (fax)
Jeff.Bender@ci.seattle.wa.us

Consultants:
Nakano Associates (Kenichi Nakano)
300 E. Pike Street
Seattle, WA 98122
206-292-9392 (ph)
206-292-9640 (fax)
kn@nakanodennis.com

Maestri (Paula Rees)
217 Pine Street – Suite 1200
Seattle, WA 98101
206-622-4322 (ph)
206-622-6043
maestri@oz.net

Two Twelve Harakawa (David Gibson)
596 Broadway, Suite 1212
New York, NY 10012
212-925-6885
212-925-6988
dgibson@twotwelve.com

Jon Bentz Design (Jon Bentz)
14722 65th Avenue West
Edmonds, WA 98026
425-745-2951 (ph)
435-741-0301 (fax)
jonbentzdesign@sprintmail.com

The Blue Ring: Connecting Places, 2002
Purpose: Connecting Seattle's open/green spaces.

Client: (inhouse project)
John Rahaim
Executive Director
Robert Scully
Project Manager
Citydesign
City of Seattle
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98104
206-615-1349

Duwanish Wayfinding, 2002
Purpose: Improved traffic signage and pedestrian wayfinding in Duwamish

Client: Metro Transit Division
Department of Transportation
Mike Stanaszek, Project Manager
201 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104-3856
Phone: 206-684-2045
email: micheal.stanaszek@metrokc.gov

Consultant:
Heffron Transportation, Inc.
6544 NE 61st Street
Seattle WA 98115
206-523-3939

Sound Transit, 2002
Purpose:

Client:
Sound Transit
Lana Nelson
Project Manager for Accessibility/ADA/Signage
Micheal Miller
Project Coordinator for Mobility Initiative
Union Station
401 S. Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104-2826
(503) 579-3941

Consultant: need to find out

Highway Signage
Staff: Susan Jurasz, Peter Reedijk, Catherine McCoy,
We drove highways I-5, 99, and 90 into the city, from each direction. Along the highways, we documented all directional signage that related to the Center City and its neighborhoods. We took each city exit from these highways, then documented directional signage on first and second intersections from each exit, assessing the helpfulness of directional signs once the visitor has left the highway. Our highway signage data was entered into the GIS database along with the neighborhood inventory data.

Collecting City Data
Staff: Susan Jurasz, Peter Reedijk, Catherine McCoy
We collected current wayfinding data from the City of Seattle: copies of existing sign regulations and a matrix showing an inventory of type and location of directional signs in Center City neighborhoods. The sign regulations will be considered as part of the design phase of the project; the inventory matrix formed a starting point for our neighborhood inventory (see below). From the City, we obtained GIS database of streets and aerial photographs that became the basis for our neighborhood inventory database

Tourist Information/Map Survey
Staff: Susan Jurasz, Peter Reedijk, Katie Butowicz
We visited city websites, the Chamber of Commerce, visitor information stations, rental car agencies, and train depots to collect brochures, pamphlets, and maps of the city. We collected over 20 commonly used (and distributed) Seattle maps and reviewed them for the following information:
- Destinations listed
- Neighborhoods identified
- Orientation (N/S, around I-5, etc.)
- Identification of Center City area

We interviewed staff at Visitor Information at the Convention Center and Pioneer Square, and spoke to:

Marilee Amendola, Visitor Information Manager
Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau
520 Pike Street, Suite 1300
Seattle, WA 98101
206-461-5840

Findings: There are two or three maps that are consistently the most useful and popular for tourists arriving in Seattle. All three of these are commercially produced, and heavy on advertising.

Dick Ingels privately produces the most commonly used map and supports the updating a printing through advertisement.

The maps are distributed by a single company throughout Seattle to hotels, visitor centers, ferry terminal, etc. The map or item must be "certified" to be distributed. Contact Weldon Vittitow (253) 872-6577 (not certain how to be certified)

Where Map Company
Where Magazine

Parking
Staff: Susan Jurasz, Peter Reedijk, Catherine McCoy
We used two contemporary city produced brochures to verify and map parking areas, and to provide a parking "layer" for our database. These are:

1) How To Park In Downtown Seattle (2000 Edition) Copyright Downtwon Seattle Association 206-623-0340

This map identifies surface parking lots, garage parking lots, and CityPark lots. It lists 58,000 . . parking spaces.

2) Where to Park in South Downtown (2000- . . . 2001 Edition)

We met with:
Mary Catherine Synder,
City of Seattle
Strategic Planning Office
Transportation
206-684-8110
email: marycatherine.snyder@ci.seattle.wa.us

Ms. Snyder said the two maps we were using were the most "accurate" and the only available

information. She gave us the following parking studies for support materials. She told us that there was no comprehensive GIS layer available.

We collected and reviewed the following parking studies:

Seattle Parking Management Plan, 2002
Purpose: To evaluate the City's current on-street parking management

Client: City of Seattle
Strategic Planning Office
600 4th Ave, Room 300
Seattle WA 98104

Consultants:
Heffron Transportation, Inc.
6544 NE 61st Street
Seattle WA 98115
206-523-3939

Berk & Associates
120 Lakeside Avenue
Suite 200
Seattle, WA 98122
206-324-8760

Parking Tax Analysis, 2002
Purpose: An assessment of the potential implications of implementing a commercial parking tax in the City of Seattle.

Client: City of Seattle
Strategic Planning Office
600 4th Ave, Room 300
Seattle WA 98104

Consultant:
Berk & Associates
120 Lakeside Avenue
Suite 200
Seattle, WA 98122
206-324-8760

Parking Inventory for Seattle and Bellevue, 2000
Purpose: Inventory of all off-street parking for downtown Seattle and downtown Bellevue, including occupancy rates and costs to park per 2 hours, per day, and per month.

Client: City of Seattle
Strategic Planning Office
600 4th Ave, Room 300
Seattle WA 98104

Copies:
Puget Sound Regional Center
Information Center
1011 Western Ave
Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98104-1035
206-464-7532

Consultant: does not mention name

Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study, 2000
Purpose: To help citizens, elected officials, and staff develop comprehensive solutions for neighborhood parking issues

Client: City of Seattle
Strategic Planning Office
600 4th Ave, Room 300
Seattle WA 98104

Consultant: does not mention name

Phase I Pilot Kiosk Review
Staff: Katie Butowicz
Sea Reach conducted a study of the status of the 28 pilot kiosks from Phase I. She visited and photographed each kiosk, observed and interviewed pedestrians using kiosks, and created a matrix that included information on installation, vandalism, maintenance, and effectiveness for each of the kiosks.

Maintenance
Staff: Susan Jurasz, Peter Reedijk
As the DOT sign shop had not been directly involved in the Phase I process, they had been unable to comment on the production of signage that they would be responsible for maintaining. We met with them to bring them into the Phase II process, and to ensure that their maintenance and manufacturing capabilities are considered during the design process.

Bike/Bus/Train/Ferry Wayfinding
Staff: Susan Jurasz, Peter Reedijk, Catherine McCoy
We did some bicycling, rode the Metro buses downtown throughout the Free Zone, took the ferry in and out of the waterfront, and visited the Amtrak station at the International District.

As we explore these routes, we keep these questions in mind:

- How effective are the current route maps?
- Are all major decision points well-signed?
- Does a traveler get confused or lost?
- How does the route interface with other traffic?
- Does a traveler get a sense of individual neighborhoods?
- Are there Downtown Seattle or City Center signs?
- Are there ways to improve the experience?

Wayfinding Systems from Other Cities
Staff: Katie Butowicz
We have done some research on other cities' wayfinding systems as part of our research phase; we will do more as part of the design phase.

Identifiers


Thematic

Architecture/Streetscapes

Wayfinding

Next

Directionals

Researching the City
As a method for getting to know Seattle, we walked the streets in each neighborhood and documented via photography, maps and field notes the following information:

Intersections /Entrance
All intersections that represent entrances into the neighborhood. These areas are documented for two reasons: 1) to see what identifying features currently exist to inform a driver or pedestrian that they are entering a neighborhood, and 2) to provide a photographic base for the design at in the future.

Identifiers
Any time the neighborhood name appeared as a building name, a business, a banners, mural, etc, we photographed and logged it as an "identifier." Some neighborhoods were loaded with identifiers, such as Belltown, Uptown/Queen Anne, or Waterfront. Others were not well identified—for example, there was nothing in Commercial Core that said "Commercial Core."

Thematic
Elements that appear to be part of the neighborhood, but do not say the neighborhood name explicitly. These may be consistent architectural elements and/or thematic elements such as public art (stone benches, sidewalk textures: logs, construction lamp hangers) — they must be found only in that neighborhood.

Architecture/Streetscapes
Sometimes the architecture or landscape sets the "tone" or "feeling" of the neighborhood. This is particularly true for areas like Pioneer Square where the age of the area is apparent in the style of the buildings and the cobblestone streets. The International District is obvious because of its architecture and streetscapes—much of the signage is bilingual—large Asian letters advertise most of the businesses and many of the buildings reflect the heavily tiled colorful roofs and ornate facades common to China.

Wayfinding
This category is different from directionals listed below—this wayfinding category includes all signage offering primarily pedestrian map information or directions within a distinct area. Generally this signage is privately designed and produced and does not follow standards.

Next
We abbreviated this category with the word "next." This is in reference to neighboring neighborhoods. Anytime a neighboring neighborhood was advertised or identified, we made note of it. For example, in Belltown, there was a directional to Queen Ann on Western and there were several entrances to the Waterfront along Elliot Ave.

Directionals
All vehicular directionals, generally produced by the department of transportation.

Potential
We photographed sites for ancillary or supportive wayfinding information within each neighborhood. This category will be explored more thoroughly in during design.